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SUBJECT: WHALING UPDATE: RUDD TO RAISE WITH SECRETARY,  
MEDIA PUSH LIKELY

REF: CANBERRA 15

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Edgard Kagan, Reasons 1.4(b)  
(d).

11. (C/NF) SUMMARY: PM Rudd, under increasing political pressure on the current Australia-Japan whaling dispute, will raise the issue with the Secretary on the margins of the January 18 AUSMIN meetings. Australian media will likely ask about U.S. policy on whaling, views on Australia's policy, or both. Australian officials have indicated that they hope to frame the issue around U.S. and Australian support for successful negotiations in the International Whaling Commission. End Summary.

PRESSURE PUTS WHALES ON RUDD AGENDA  
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12. (C/NF) PM Rudd will raise the current Australia-Japan whaling dispute with the Secretary on the margins of the January 18 AUSMIN meetings. Paula Watt, Director of the Marine Environment Section at DFAT, told Econoff January 12 that the PM will raise the issue although it is "not an agenda item." Watt said that Australian media is certain to question the Secretary on either U.S. policy on whaling, her view on Australia's efforts, or both. Rudd will have to make public that he raised the issue with the U.S., but Watt said the plan is to have the PM frame his message around the International Whaling Commission (IWC), seeking U.S. support for a "strong outcome" through IWC negotiations. Watt agreed that raising this issue in a way that seeks or implies U.S. support for action outside the IWC negotiations would be counterproductive.

13. (C/NF) Rudd's need to engage on this was echoed by Environment Minister Peter Garrett's Chief of Staff, David Williams, in a call with Econoff on January 11. Williams said the government is under a lot of pressure, fueled by both the Opposition and the Greens, to raise this with the Secretary. Williams pointed out that while the U.S. and Australia do not completely agree on a methodology to reduce whaling, highlighting our differences will not contribute to a productive discussion. While Garrett wants to discuss whaling with the Secretary, Williams accepted that the schedule was full and did not press for access for Garrett.

JAPAN WANTS TO DELAY DISCUSSION OF NUMBERS  
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14. (C/NF) Watt noted that the Japanese are supposed to

propose a whaling quota number in discussions scheduled for January 18. Watt expects Japan to either demur or provide an incomplete set of numbers with the goal of slow-rolling the negotiations. Japan will likely use the January 5 Sea Shepherd confrontation (reftel) as a justification for not meeting the deadline fully. Watt said that the Australia Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) investigation will be carried out quickly and that AMSA had asked Japan and the Sea Shepherd group to provide information by January 13. Watt expects no meaningful response from Japan by this deadline.

15. (C/NF) Comment: The public outcry over whaling means Rudd will raise the issue with the Secretary. That his statements will highlight the ongoing IWC negotiating framework signals a more pragmatic approach, for now.

CLUNE